<u>AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS</u>

1. (Currently Amended) A method of optimizing a product ~~during an optimization~~ ~~session, each optimization session comprising one or more computer sessions,~~ said product including a base product, the method comprising the steps of:

    (a) obtaining an identification of a user and a preliminary designation of said product; said identification identifying a user profile that is uniquely associated with said user, the user profile being persistent across multiple optimization sessions and ~~including at least one characteristic~~ ~~corresponding to said user~~ <u>comprising a plurality of characteristics of said</u> <u>user, said plurality of characteristics comprising:</u>

        (1) <u>a preferred social interaction type;</u>

        (2) <u>a plurality of domain familiarity indications, each of said domain</u> <u>familiarity indications reflecting said user's knowledge about a</u> <u>specific product domain; and</u>

        (3) <u>a price sensitivity for said user;</u>

    (b) providing a formatted display that includes a set of content related to said product and a format, the set of content ~~and the format~~ determined <u>at</u> <u>least in part by a characteristic selected from the group consisting of:</u>

        (1) <u>the preferred social interaction type;</u>

        (2) <u>the plurality of domain familiarity indications; and</u>

        (3) <u>the price sensitivity for said user;</u>

        ~~by the at least one characteristic in said user profile;~~

    (c) updating, based on a response by the user;

(1)   the plurality of characteristics to create an updated user profile, wherein updating the plurality of characteristics comprises updating at least one characteristic selected from the group consisting of:

     i)   the preferred social interaction type;

     ii)   the plurality of domain familiarity indications; and

     iii)   the price sensitivity for said user;

~~the at least one characteristic in said user profile to create an updated user profile;~~

(2)   a component associated with said base product when said response includes a selection of an option from a different set of options associated with said component;

(d)   storing said updated user profile to determine the set of content ~~and format~~ of the formatted display for a future presentation made to said user, wherein the set of content of the formatted display for the future presentation is determined at least in part by a characteristic selected from the group consisting of:

     (1)   the preferred social interaction type;

     (2)   the plurality of domain familiarity indications; and

     (3)   the price sensitivity for said user; and

(e)   repeating steps (b) through (d) across one or more computer sessions at least once to optimize said product.

2.   (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein said product further includes a plurality of components associated with said base product, each

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component in said plurality of components corresponding to, and selected by said user from, a different set of options, using said formatted display.

3.   (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 2, wherein a default option is designated for each component in said plurality of components.

4.   (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 2, wherein said formatted display comprises a menu including one or more elements selected from the group consisting of an option selected from said different set of options associated with said component, a frequently asked question associated with said component, an instructional sequence prompt, and a recommendation message.

5.   (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, further comprising presenting in the formatted display one or more suggested components based on the user profile.

6.   (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein the formatted display provides a portion of a set of options corresponding to [[a]] said component associated with said base product.

7.   (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein said response to said formatted display of step (b) includes a designation of an option for [[a]] said component associated with said base product and step (c) further comprises the step of updating at least one characteristic in said user profile associated with said component.

8.   (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein said product is optimized when said user indicates that said product is optimized.

9.   (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein said set of content for said

formatted display ~~reports a correlation between~~ <u>is further determined based on a suitability factor of said</u> [[a]] component in said product ~~and~~ <u>for an intended use for the product</u> ~~a characteristic in said user profile~~ <u>and wherein the component is emphasized</u> when said ~~correlation~~ <u>suitability factor</u> exceeds a threshold value<u>;</u> <u>and wherein said suitability factor is a value retrieved from a database, and wherein the intended use for the product is a characteristic stored in the user profile</u>.

10.   (Cancelled)

11.   (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 9, further comprising the steps of:

determining a change to [[a]] <u>said</u> component ~~in the plurality of components associated with said base product~~ that maximizes said ~~correlation between said~~ <u>suitability factor of said</u> component in said product <u>for the user's intended use for said product</u> ~~and said characteristic in said user profile~~;

presenting said change in response to a user generated event; and

implementing said change to said product when a confirming response is received.

12.   (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 9, wherein said product further includes a plurality of components associated with said base product, each component in said plurality of components associated with, and selected from, a different set of options; and

<u>the different set of options associated with each component from said set of components is provided if said suitability factor for said component for the intended use of the product exceeds the threshold value</u> ~~said correlation between a component associated with said product and a characteristic in said user profile exceeds a threshold value when said response to said formatted display of step (e)~~

~~includes a designation of an option for a component associated with said base product.~~

13. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein a timer is used to monitor the period of time between the presentation of said formatted display and the response to the formatted display by the user and, when said user does not respond to said formatted display within a period of time, said failure to respond is treated as a response comprising a signal that said user has chosen not to respond to said formatted display.

14. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein options for said component are presented in said formatted display of step (b); wherein the selected component is dynamically selected from a plurality of components associated with said base product based on said user profile.

15. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

transmitting a set of questions;

receiving at least one answer to said set of questions; and

updating said characteristic in said user profile based on said at least one answer.

16. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein a characteristic in said user profile associated with said user is modified based on a user event associated with said user occurring during an optimization of a different product.

17. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein a characteristic in said user profile associated with said user is modified based on a user event associated with said user occurring during an optimization of said product during a different session.

18.   (Currently Amended) A computer readable memory to direct a computer to optimize a product ~~during an optimization session comprising one or more computer sessions~~, said product including a base product, comprising:

a user profile database stored in said memory; each profile in said user profile database being uniquely associated with a different user, persisting across multiple optimization sessions, and ~~including a characteristic that corresponds to said user~~ <u>comprising a plurality of characteristics, said plurality of characteristics comprising</u>:

(a)   <u>a preferred social interaction type;</u>

(b)   <u>a plurality of domain familiarity indications, each of said domain familiarity indications reflecting said user's knowledge about a specific product domain; and</u>

(c)   <u>a price sensitivity</u>; and

an advisor module for helping a user optimize said product;

said advisor module including executable instructions, said executable instructions including:

(a)   instructions for obtaining an identification of said user and a preliminary designation of said product; said identification identifying a user profile associated with said user ~~that includes at least one characteristic corresponding to said user~~ in said user profile database; wherein said instructions for obtaining an identification further include instructions for creating said user profile when it does not exist in said user profile database;

(b)   instructions for providing a formatted display that includes a set of content related to said product, the set of content ~~and the format~~ determined <u>at least in part by a function of at least one characteristic from said user profile, said at least one characteristic</u>

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selected from the group consisting of:

    (1)   a preferred social interaction type for the user;

    (2)   a plurality of domain familiarity indications for the user;

    (3)   a price sensitivity for the user ~~by a function of the at least one characteristic in said user profile~~;

(c)   instructions for updating, based on a response by said user:

    (1)   ~~the at least one characteristic in~~ said user profile to create an updated user profile, wherein updating said user profile comprises updating at least one characteristic selected from the group consisting of:

        i)   the preferred social interaction type;

        ii)   the plurality of domain familiarity indications; and

        iii)   the price sensitivity; and

    (2)   a component associated with said base product when said response includes a selection of an option from a different set of options associated with said component; and

(d)   storing said updated user profile to determine the set of content ~~and format~~ of the formatted display for a future presentation made to said user, wherein the set of content of the formatted display for the future presentation is determined at least in part by a characteristic selected from the group consisting of:

    (1)   the preferred social interaction type;

    (2)   the plurality of domain familiarity indications; and

> (3) the price sensitivity for said user; and

> (e) repeating steps (b) through (d) across one or more computer sessions at least once to optimize said product.

19. (Previously Presented) The computer readable memory of Claim 18, wherein said product further includes a plurality of components associated with said base product, each component in said plurality of components corresponding to, and selected by said user from, a different set of options.

20. (Previously Presented) The computer readable memory of Claim 19, wherein a default option is designated for each component in said plurality of components.

21. (Previously Presented) The computer readable memory of Claim 18, wherein the formatted display provides a portion of a set of options corresponding to a component associated with said base product.

22. (Previously Presented) The computer readable memory of Claim 18, wherein said response to said formatted display of step (b) includes a designation of an option for a component associated with said base product and step (c) further includes instructions for updating said component in said user profile.

23. (Previously Presented) The computer readable memory of Claim 18, wherein said product is optimized when said user indicates that said product is optimized.

24. (Currently Amended) The computer readable memory of Claim 18, wherein said set of content for said formatted display reports a correlation between is further determined based on a suitability factor of [[a]] said component in said product and for the user's intended use for said product a characteristic in said user profile when said correlation and wherein the component is emphasized when said suitability factor exceeds a threshold value.

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25.   (Previously Presented) The computer readable memory of Claim 18, wherein a
timer is used to monitor the period of time between the presentation of said
formatted display and the response to the formatted display by the user and when
said user does not respond to said formatted display within a period of time, a
signal that said user has not chosen to respond to said formatted display is sent to
the instructions for receiving a response.

26.   (Previously Presented) The computer readable memory of Claim 18, wherein
instructions for obtaining an identification of a user and a preliminary
designation of said product further includes:

> instructions for querying said user profile database and identifying said
user profile from a response to said query; wherein, when a response to said
query fails to identify said profile, said instructions to obtain a user profile
further include:

> instructions for initiating a new user profile and associating said new user
profile with said user; and

> instructions for storing said new user profile in said user profile database.

27.   (Prevoiusly Presented) The computer readable memory of Claim 18, further
comprising:

> a knowledge database stored in said memory; said knowledge database
including a description of said base product and a description of at least one
option in at least one set of options corresponding to a component associated
with said base product; wherein:

> said instructions for providing a formatted display, which includes the set
of options corresponding to a component selected from said plurality of
components associated with said base product, further includes:

instructions for accessing a description of an option in said different set of options associated with said component from said knowledge database; wherein said function comprises a comparison of said description with said characteristic in said user profile.

28.	(Previously Presented) The computer readable memory of Claim 18, further comprising:

a sales module; said sales module including executable instructions, said executable instructions including:

(a)	instructions for providing a product selection choice; each said product in said product selection choice including a base product and at least one default component;

(b)	instructions for receiving an election; said election designating a product in said product selection choice;

(c)	instructions for determining when to call an instance of said advisor module; and

(d)	instructions for calling an instance of said advisor module.

29.	(Previously Presented) The computer readable memory of Claim 28, wherein said instructions for calling an instance of said advisor module further includes instructions for generating said event record and for passing said event record to said advisor module when said instance of said advisor module is called by said sales module.

30.	(Previously Presented) The computer readable memory of Claim 28, the computer readable memory further comprising a sales database for storing pricing information associated with said product; the sales module further including:

instructions for querying said sales database for pricing information corresponding to said product selection; and

instructions for transmitting said pricing information.

31. (Previously Presented) The computer readable memory of Claim 28, wherein said sales module further includes:

instructions for providing a user selectable event;

instructions for receiving an indication that said user selectable event has been selected by said user; said sales module further including instructions for notifying said advisor module when a signal indicating that said user selectable event has been selected is received.

32. (Previously Presented) The computer readable memory of Claim 28, wherein said sales module further comprises instructions for terminating an instance of said advisor module when a second election is received by said instructions for receiving an election described in claim 28 paragraph b; said second election including an indication that said user wishes to terminate said instance of said advisor module.

33. (Previously Presented) The computer readable memory of Claim 18, wherein said profile in said user profile database includes a user identifier and at least one entry selected from the group consisting of a domain familiarity indicator, an advisor interaction database, a product preference database, a product selection database, and a user characteristic.

34. (Previously Presented) The computer readable memory of Claim 18, wherein said formatted display comprises a menu including one or more elements selected from the group consisting of an option associated with a component, associated with said base product a frequently asked question associated with

said component, an instructional sequence prompt, and a recommendation message.

35. (Previously Presented) The computer readable memory of Claim 18, wherein a manifestation of said advisor module includes at least one feature selected from the group consisting of an on-screen character, an audible voice, text, a multimedia prop, and a sound effect.

36. (Previously Presented) The computer readable memory of Claim 18, wherein said advisor module further comprises:

instructions for storing a record of said product optimization; and instructions for resuming a product optimization based on a stored record of a prior product optimization.

37. (Currently Amended) A method of optimizing a product, ~~during an optimization session comprising one or more computer sessions,~~ said product including a base product, the method comprising the steps of:

(a) obtaining an identification of a user and a preliminary designation of said product; said identification identifying a user profile which is persistent across multiple optimization sessions and that is uniquely associated with said user, the user profile ~~including at least one characteristic corresponding to said user~~ comprising data used to model said user, said data used to model said user comprising:

(1) a first set of data, said first set of data having been collected through explicit user selections; and

(2) a second set of data, said second set of data having been inferred from user actions;

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(b)   providing a formatted display that includes a set of content related to said product and a format, the set of content ~~and the format~~ determined <u>at least in part by said second set of data used to model said user and inferred from user actions</u>;

~~by the at least one characteristic in said user profile;~~

(c)   updating, based on a response by the user<u>:</u>~~;~~

         (1)   <u>said data used to model said user to create an updated user profile; and</u>

                  ~~the at least one characteristic in said user profile to create an updated user profile;~~

         (2)   a component associated with said base product when said response includes a selection of an option from a different set of options associated with said component;

(d)   storing said updated user profile to determine the set of content ~~and format~~ of the formatted display for a future presentation made to said user;

(e)   repeating steps (b) through (d) across one or more computer sessions at least once to optimize said product; and

(f)   providing automated assistance at the request of said user; and

(g)   presenting in the formatted display one or more suggested components based on the user profile.

38.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 37, wherein the <u>data used to model said user</u> ~~at least one characteristic in said user profile~~ comprises an indicator that indicates the number of times that the user requested automated assistance.

39. (Currently Amended) The method of claim <u>37</u> ~~1~~, wherein the <u>data used to model said user</u> ~~at least one characteristic in said user profile~~ comprises an indication of the user's price sensitivity.

40. (New) The method of claim 37, wherein providing the formatted display comprises providing a recommendation to the user, wherein the first set of data and the second set of data comprise a plurality of characteristics, wherein each characteristic from the plurality of characteristics has a weight, and wherein updating the data used to model the user comprises, for at least one characteristic from the plurality of characteristics:

    (a)   increasing the weight for that characteristic if the recommendation is accepted; or

    (b)   decreasing the weight for that characteristic if the recommendation is rejected.